

**Utility Disruption
Incident Annex XI
Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan**

LEAD AGENCY: Public Utilities Commission, Department of Regulatory Agencies

SUPPORTING AGENCIES: Governor's Office, Human Services, Local Affairs, Military and Veteran Affairs, Natural Resources, Personnel & Administration, Public Health and Environment, Public Safety, Transportation, Red Cross, Salvation Army, COVOAD, Private Sector

I. PURPOSE

This incident annex has been prepared to facilitate a coordinated response and assign responsibilities by state agencies to requests from local jurisdictions to mitigate, respond, and recover from prolonged statewide or regional shortages of utilities.

II. POLICIES

Following the issuance of a local emergency declaration, the Governor may issue a state declaration, which may make response and recovery funding available as well as other state resources.

III. SITUATION

- A. Generally, utility outages result from failures in the distribution system as opposed to shortages of supply. Distribution components are most susceptible to failure during extreme hot and cold temperatures as well as during violent weather conditions. Regional failures can threaten human life, particularly when outages affect hospitals, nursing homes, or other healthcare facilities.
- B. Electricity. Extended electrical outages can directly impact other utility systems, particularly water and wastewater systems. In areas where telephone service is provided by above-ground lines that share poles with electrical distribution lines, telecommunications providers may not be able to make repairs to the telephone system until electrical utilities restore power lines to a safe condition. Electrical outages can also adversely affect the availability of fueling facilities that require electrical power to physically move the fuel.
- C. Gas. This not only involves the various power generation sectors but heating fuel as well. This is extremely critical in the rural areas where a single-source is the norm.

- D. Telecommunications. Telecommunications includes voice and data transmission. Due to the reliance upon the speed of this sector, there may be economic impact upon those within the affected area.
- E. Water/wastewater. Disruption of water may require notification of the public and businesses, within the affected area, to: curtail usage; boil available water; acquire bottled water; etc. This may also impact local fire fighting activities.
- F. Utility companies may not be able to restore service to all critical facilities in a timely manner, particularly if damage has been catastrophic and a substantial amount of equipment must be replaced or if repairs require specialized equipment or materials that are not readily available. In large-scale disasters, utility companies may have to compete with individuals, businesses, industry, government, and other utility companies for manpower, equipment, and supplies.

IV. ASSUMPTIONS

- A. See Basic Plan
- B. Public utilities are defined as those companies and organizations that are authorized to provide utility services, including electricity, gas, telephone, and water to the general public in a specific geographic area. Utilities may be owned and/ or operated by a municipality, a regional utility authority, or private sector.
- C. Utilities have emergency operations plans for restoring disrupted service and many maintain emergency operations centers. A major emergency or disaster affecting a wide area may require extensive repairs and/or reconstruction of portions of utility systems that may take considerable time to complete.
- D. Utilities are complex systems and service may be restored on a patchwork basis as damaged components are repaired or replaced. Some areas may have utility service restored while adjacent areas may not.
- E. The National Weather Service (NWS) will provide severe weather warnings. Warning time will vary.

V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. It is essential to obtain an initial estimate of the likely duration of a major utility outage from the utility as soon as possible after it occurs. Once the estimate is obtained, a determination of the anticipated impact and actions require protecting public health and safety, and public and private property can be made.

- B. In large-scale emergency situations that produce catastrophic damage in a limited area (such as a tornado) or severe damage over a wide area (such as a hurricane), utilities are typically faced with a massive repair and rebuilding effort that cannot be completed in a reasonable time without external support. In such circumstances, utilities typically bring in equipment and crews from other utilities pursuant to mutual aid agreements and from specialized contractors.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Governor's Office:

1. Authorize state active duty status for use of Colorado National Guard personnel to provide lifesaving assistance, if necessary.
2. Following the state disaster statutes, make monies available through the state disaster fund or other funds to provide for basic recovery of essential life services.
3. Activate the Colorado State Operations Emergency Plan.

B. Public Utilities Commission:

1. Work with the private sector to determine the extent of the outage and assist in the establishment of priorities for reconstituting affected areas.
2. Maintain communications and advise the Division of Emergency Management of ongoing activities.
3. Work with public utility entities for rapid notification of the general public regarding the situation, conservation measures, and response/recovery activities that are being taken.
4. Work with utilities to identify damage assessment information they can normally provide in an emergency.

C. Public Utility Entities

1. Determine the extent of the outage and identify critical infrastructure that should receive priority in resumption of services.
2. Implement priority service restoration plans.
3. Work with the Public Utilities Commission for rapid notification of the general public regarding the situation, conservation measures, and response/recovery activities that are being taken.
4. Participate in inspection of affected structures to identify hazards created by damaged utilities.
5. Work with government officials for notification of property owners, following the rendering of electrical lines and gas distribution lines, that the affected area is safe for re-entry.

D. Division of Emergency Management:

1. Monitor severe weather conditions, as needed.
2. Coordinate state response to requests for assistance from local jurisdictions.
3. Activate and staff the State Emergency Operations Center.
4. Maintain communications with Governor's office, other state agencies and local jurisdictions regarding the status of response and recovery efforts.

E. American Red Cross/Salvation Army

ARC/SA - Provide shelters and provisions for stranded people in accordance with internal procedures.

F. Department of Military and Veteran Affairs

1. On order, to provide transportation assets to haul necessary material to the affected region.
2. Provide personnel for security operations.

G. Department of Public Health & Environment

1. Provide assistance to local health departments in vector control, public health issues, water quality and hazardous materials issues.
2. Coordinate with medical facilities that must relocate patients that cannot maintain the required level of service for their clients.

H. Department of Public Safety

Be prepared to assign law enforcement personnel to augment local agencies in the affected area.

I. Department of Transportation

1. Provide assistance by providing barricades, debris removal and road repair as requested.
2. Maintain communications and advise dispatch of current conditions in all areas of the state - these reports will be relayed, as needed, to the Division of Emergency Management.

J. Other State Agencies

Provide support as requested by the Division of Emergency Management.

- I. ESFs that are likely to be involved in an utility disruption emergency are: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15 -- agency involvement will vary with the circumstances of each incident.